AN EVALUATION OF THE USEFULNESS OF THE SMALL HEAT SHOCK GENES FOR PHYLOGENETIC ANALYSIS IN PLANTS¹

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ABSTRACT

Sequences from chloroplast DNA and rDNA genes have proved useful in estimating phylogenetic relationships among plants. However, the coding regions of rDNA evolve slowly and are not useful at lower levels of analysis. There are chloroplast-encoded genes that evolve at a higher rate, but since chloroplast DNA is uniparentally inherited, nuclear markers are also needed when introgression or hybridization have occurred. There is then a need for additional nuclear genes that can be used in phylogenetic analysis. Nuclear genes have been largely unused in phylogenetic analysis for several reasons, including the difficulty of distinguishing orthologous from paralogous genes and the problems that can ensue from constructing phylogenetic trees from data matrices that contain both types of genes. This paper is an evaluation of the potential of the genes encoding the small heat shock proteins for phylogenetic analysis of plants. The small heat shock genes in plants are a super gene family composed of four gene families. In this paper I present restriction site analysis of the small heat shock genes from the Brassicaceae, and similarity, rate of evolution, and phylogenetic analysis of small heat shock gene sequences from monocots and dicots. I show that these genes possess the necessary genetic variation for phylogenetic analysis and that the gene families are easily distinguishable from each other, and that, in at least some of the gene families, orthologous and paralogous genes do not pose a problem for phylogenetic analysis.

In recent years the availability of molecular data has vastly increased our ability to test hypotheses of both phylogenetic relationships among plant groups and population-level evolutionary processes. These studies, with few exceptions, have relied primarily on chloroplast DNA (cpDNA) and nuclear ribosomal DNA (rDNA) (Clegg & Zurawski, 1992; Hamby & Zimmer, 1992). The large numbers of cpDNA sequences (Chase et al., 1993) across many taxonomic groups have enabled scientists to test hypotheses concerning rates of evolution of genes used as markers in phylogenetic analysis, in addition to addressing phylogenetic questions (Bousquet et al., 1992; Gaut et al., 1992). However, the recognition of the distinction between gene trees and species trees and the effects that hybridization can have on phylogenies constructed from uniparentally inherited genes (Dorado et al., 1992; Doyle, 1992; Pamilo & Nei, 1988; Rieseberg et al., 1990; Rieseberg & Brunsfeld, 1992;

Rieseberg & Soltis, 1991) has led to the awareness that additional molecular markers are needed. In addition, there is concern over the effects of multiple changes at one site (Smith, 1989) and secondary structure and compensatory mutations (Dixon & Hillis, 1993) on phylogenetic reconstruction using rDNA sequences.

Systematists have been wary of using nuclear genes for phylogenetic analysis because many nuclear genes are members of multi-gene families (Doyle, 1993). The inability to distinguish orthologous and paralogous genes within a multi-gene family could undermine attempts to construct organismal relationships. Gene conversion and recombination within gene families will obscure organismal relationships, and this may not be immediately obvious from the cladograms (Sanderson & Doyle, 1992). Thus, prior to its use in phylogenetic analysis the evolutionary dynamics of a gene should be examined. In this paper the small

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heat shock protein genes are examined for their usefulness in phylogenetic reconstruction.

Organisms respond to heat stress with the rapid induction of the heat shock genes and subsequent production of heat shock proteins (hsp) that are necessary for thermal tolerance. The heat shock genes are members of multi-gene families based on the size of the proteins the genes encode. The small heat shock proteins are less than 30 kDa (kilo-Dalton) in size. The large heat shock proteins range from 60 to 100 kDa. The 90, 70, and 60 kDa proteins are the most extensively studied of all of the heat shock proteins. The large heat shock proteins are chaperone proteins, i.e., they help in the proper folding and translocation of other proteins (Becker & Craig, 1994; Gething & Sambrook, 1992). The function of the small heat shock proteins, however, remains elusive. In most organisms, other than plants, the majority of the heat shock proteins produced during stress are large. The small heat shock proteins are present, but are a small percentage of the total protein. In Drosophila there are just four small heat shock genes, and in Saccharomyces there is only one (Lindquist & Craig, 1988; Susek & Lindquist, 1989). In contrast, plants produce a variety of small heat shock proteins (Vierling, 1991). There are four small heat shock protein gene families in plants. The four classes are based on overall sequence similarity and cellular localization. There are two classes of proteins that localize to the cytosol, Class I and Class II. The third class of proteins is found in the endoplasmic recticulum, and the fourth in the chloroplast. The carboxyl-terminal domain is more conserved than the amino-terminal domain both within and across protein classes (Vierling, 1991). Vierling (1991) suggested that the four classes of small heat shock genes in plants may have evolved through gene duplications.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

CLONING AND MAPPING OF A SMALL HEAT SHOCK GENE IN BRASSICA NIGRA

Brassica nigra (CrGC accession number 2-1) seeds were obtained from the Crucifer Genetic Cooperative (CrGC, Madison, Wisconsin). Seeds were germinated and planted in Terra-Lite (Grace Horticultural Products, Cambridge, Massachusetts) and grown in growth chambers in the Washington University Biology Department Plant Growth Facility (St. Louis, Missouri). Plants were harvested when they were two to three weeks old. Leaf tissue was ground to a powder in liquid nitrogen and stored

at -80°C. Total genomic DNA was isolated from individuals using a modified CTAB procedure with a phenol-chloroform extraction (King & Schaal, 1990).

Genomic DNA from Brassica nigra was cut with Xba I and was ligated into Lambda Zap vector (Stratagene, San Diego, California) also cut with Xba I. The lambda library was amplified in NM522 cells obtained from Stratagene. Lambda plaques were transferred from agar plates to nylon filters by the filter-lift procedure (Sambrook et al., 1989). Plaques of the heat shock gene were identified in the library using a cDNA clone of a small heat shock gene from Glycine max pCE53 (Schoffl & Key, 1982). The nylon (Magna nylon, MSI) filters were pre-hybridized and hybridized with hexamerlabeled pCE53 using standard protocols (King & Schaal, 1990) at moderate stringency: 2 × 15 min. with 2 × SSC 0.1% SDS at 25°C and 2 × 25 min. with 1 × SSC 0.1% SDS at 37°C (Sambrook et al., 1989). Plaques were isolated and pBluescript plasmids were obtained from the plaques according to the Stratagene in-vivo excision protocol.

Plasmid DNA was obtained by alkaline lysis followed by phenol extraction (Sambrook et al., 1989) and digested with the following restriction enzymes: Acc I, Hind III, Sal I, Pst I, Eco RI, Xba I, and Xho I (New England Biolabs). Reactions were conducted according to manufacturer's recommendations. Restriction digests were electrophoresed in 0.85% agarose gels in tris-acetate buffer. The DNA was visualized under UV light by staining with ethidium bromide. The DNA was transferred to nylon filters using standard Southern blotting procedures. The coding region of the genes was identified by hybridization of the plasmid DNA digests with radio-labeled cDNA clone of a 17.6 kDa hsp from Arabidopsis thaliana (Helm & Vierling, 1989).

SURVEY OF GENETIC VARIABILITY

Genomic DNA was isolated, using the CTAB extraction procedure described above, from each of 15 individuals of *Brassica nigra* (CrGC #2-1). Genomic DNAs were digested with *Eco* RI, and the restriction digests were electrophoresed in 0.8% agarose gels in tris-acetate buffer and transferred to nylon membrane using standard procedures. Nylon filters were hybridized with the hexamer-labeled small heat shock gene clone from *B. nigra*, described above. Filters were washed 2 × 15 min. with 2 × SSC 0.1% SDS at 65°C and 2 × 45 min. with 0.1 × SSC 0.1% SDS at 65°C and

exposed to x-ray film with intensifying screens at -80°C for three to five days.

To assess within-population restriction site variation in the small heat shock genes, seeds of Brassica oleracea, Cardamine keyserri, and Rorippa schlechteri were collected in Papua New Guinea. Collections of seeds (at least 20 seeds from each of 10 individuals per population) were made in and around the village of Safalitikin, Urapmin, Sandaun Province. Voucher specimens were deposited in the herbarium at UPNG and at MO.

Seeds were germinated and grown as described above. When plants were approximately four weeks old, leaves were harvested and stored at -80°C. Eight individuals from two populations of Rorippa schlechteri and eight individuals from one population each of Brassica oleracea and Cardamine keyserri were surveyed for within-population variation. DNA from individual plants was digested with Ban I, Eco RI, Hpa I, Hinf I, Hind III, Rsa I, Pst I, and Taq I (New England Biolabs) according to manufacturer's instructions. Restriction digests were electrophoresed in 0.8-1.2% agarose gels in tris-acetate buffer. DNA was transferred to nylon membranes and hybridized with the hexamer-labeled small heat shock clone from B. nigra, described above. Filters were washed 2 × 15 min. with 2 × SSC 0.1% SDS at 65°C and 2 × 45 min. with 0.1 × SSC 0.1% SDS at 65°C and exposed to x-ray film with intensifying screens at -80°C for three to five days.

SURVEY OF THE BRASSICA TRIANGLE AND OTHER BRASSICACEAE

Restriction sites in the small heat shock genes were surveyed among the following species: Rorippa schlechteri, Raphanus sativus (CrGC #7-1), Cardamine keyserri, Arabidopsis thaliana (CrGC #9-3), Brassica nigra (CrGC #2-1), B. oleracea (CrGC #3-1), B. rapa (CrGC #1-1), B. carinata (CrGC #6-1), B. juncea (CrGC #4-1), and B. napus (CrGC #5-1). The Brassica triangle is composed of the diploids B. nigra, B. oleraceae, and B. rapa and the amphidiploids B. carinata, B. juncea, and B. napus (Pakrash & Hinata, 1980).

Genomic DNA from at least two individuals from each species was isolated and cut with Bam HI, Eco RI, Fok I, Hind III, Hae III, Pst I, Rsa I, Sal I, and Xba I restriction enzymes. Digested DNAs were separated in 0.8% agarose gels, transferred to nylon membranes, and hybridized with the hexamer-labeled small heat shock clone from Brassica nigra, described above. Filters were washed 2 × 15 min. with 2 × SSC 0.1% SDS at 65°C and 2 × 45 min. with 0.1 × SSC 0.1% SDS

at 65°C and exposed to x-ray film with intensifying screens at -80°C for three to five days.

A portion of the gene encoding the small heat shock protein that is localized to the chloroplast was amplified from the genomic DNA of Arabidopsis thaliana, Cardamine keyserri, Brassica nigra, B. oleracea, B. napus, and B. juncea using Taq DNA polymerase, the manufacturer's buffer (Boehringer Mannheim), and primers internal to the coding sequence of the A. thaliana gene (Osteryoung et al., 1993). The primers were from base pairs 151–169 and 765–782 (using the start of the coding sequence as base pair 1). The DNA was amplified for 35 cycles with the following conditions: 94°C 1 min., 50°C 2 min., and 72°C 2 min. Products were visualized after electrophoresis in a 0.9% agarose gel with ethidium bromide.

SEQUENCE DATA ANALYSIS

Gene sequences were obtained from GenBank (see Table 1). Sequences were compared using the Gap program in the Genetic Computer Group (GCG) computer package. Alignments were generated using Pileup in GCG and were refined by hand using Lineup (see Appendix). The DNA sequences coding for the transit peptides were not used in these analyses. Synonymous and nonsynonymous substitutions were calculated using the computer program of Li (1993). Phylogenetic analyses of the small heat shock gene sequences were done using PAUP (3.1.1) (Swofford, 1993). Heuristic searches were conducted using 100 random addition taxon replicates with MULPARS and TBR branch swapping. A bootstrap analysis with 100 replicates was performed to assess support for branches.

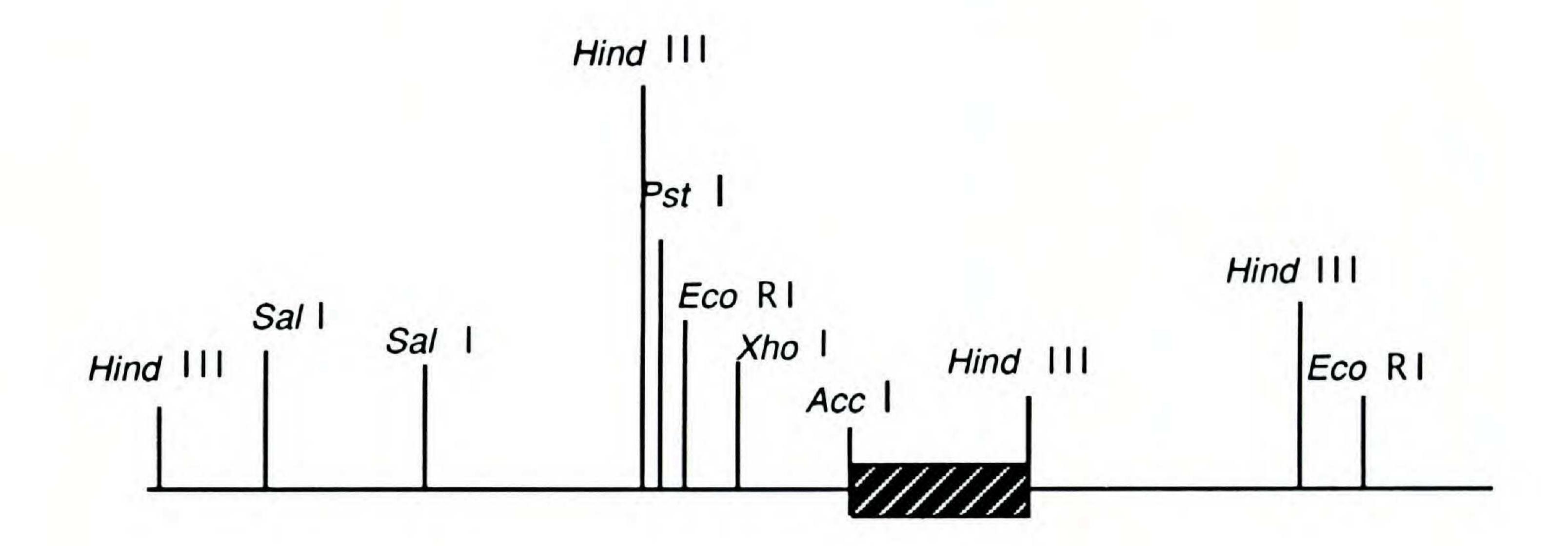
RESULTS

A full-length genomic clone encoding a cytosolic small heat shock protein was isolated. A restriction map of that clone is presented in Figure 1. The restriction enzyme Eco RI cleaves this clone twice. An Eco RI digest of genomic DNA of Brassica nigra probed with the clone of the small heat shock gene is presented in Figure 2. The sizes of the genomic Eco RI fragments in Figure 2 correspond to those predicted from the plasmid restriction map in Figure 1. The results of this Southern blot and others (data not shown) indicate that this gene is present in a single copy in B. nigra.

POPULATION-LEVEL VARIATION

To determine if there is variability in the small heat shock gene within populations, I conducted a survey in *Brassica nigra*, *B. oleracea*, *Cardamine*

Genomic heat shock clone from Brassica nigra



1 kb

FIGURE 1. Restriction map of a Brassica nigra small heat shock gene. The shaded box represents the coding region.

Table 1. Sources of sequences used in phylogenetic analyses of small heat shock genes.

Species	Protein	GenBank accession	Reference
A. Genes for the chloroplast-localized pro	teins:		
Triticum aestivum Percival	Hsp 26A	X58280	Weng et al., 1991
Triticum aestivum	Hsp 26B	X67328	unpublished
Pisum sativum Poir.	Hsp 21	X07187	Vierling et al., 1988
Glycine max Merr.	Hsp 22	X07188	Vierling et al., 1988
Petunia hybrida Vilm.	Hsp 21	X54103	Chen & Vierling, 1991
Arabidopsis thaliana B. Heyne	Hsp 21	X54102	Chen & Vierling, 1991
3. Genes for endomembrane-localized pro	teins:		
Pisum sativum	Hsp 22	M33898	Helm et al., 1993
Glycine max	Hsp 22	X63198	Helm et al., 1993
C. Genes for the class I cytosolically-loca	lized proteins:		
Zea mays Doebley & Iltis	Hsp 17.2	X65725	unpublished
Pisum sativum	Hsp 18.1	M33899	Lauzon et al., 1990
Arabidopsis thaliana	Hsp 17.6	X16076	Goping et al., 1991
O. Genes for the class II cytosolically-loc	alized proteins:		
Zea mays	Hsp 17.5	X54076	Goping et al., 1991
Zea mays	Hsp 17.8	X54075	Goping et al., 1991
Triticum aestivum	Hsp 17.3	X58279	Weng et al., 1991
Pisum sativum	Hsp 17.7	M33901	Lauzon et al., 1990
Glycine max	Hsp 17.9	X07159	Raschke et al., 1988
Arabidopsis thaliana	Hsp 17.6	X63443	Barling et al., 1992
Pharbatis nil Roth	Hsp 18.8	M99430	Krishna et al., 1992
Pharbatis nil	Hsp 17.2	M99429	Krishna et al., 1992

EcoR I Digest

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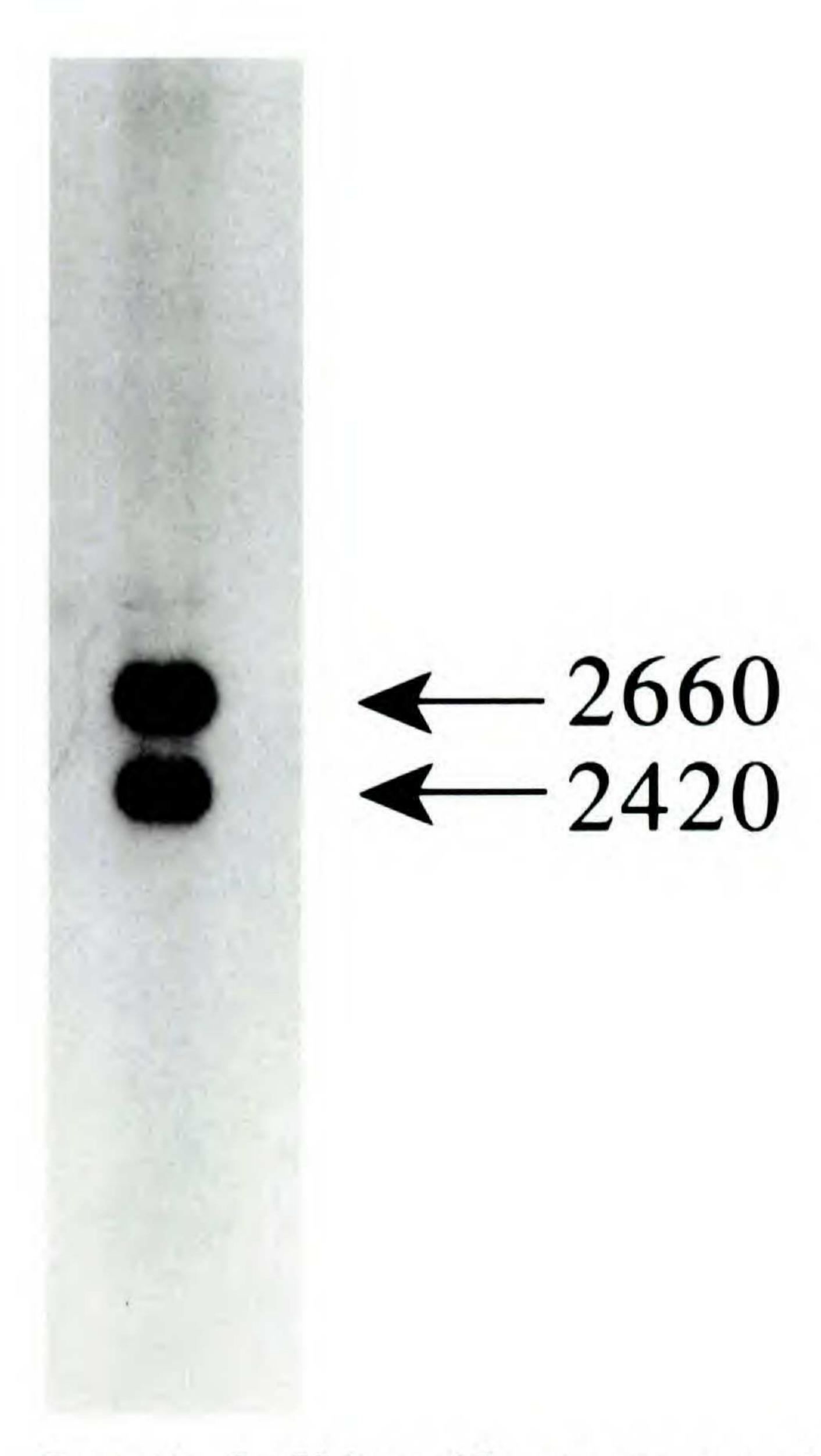


FIGURE 2. Eco RI digest of Brassica nigra genomic DNA probed with the clone of the B. nigra small heat shock gene.

keyserri, and Rorippa schlechteri. DNA from 15 individuals of the CrGC rapidly cycling population of B. nigra was digested with Eco RI. This blot was probed with the full-length heat shock clone (containing both the coding and the flanking regions), and no polymorphisms were detected (data not shown). Populations of B. oleracea, R. schlechteri, and C. keyserri were also surveyed. DNAs from eight individuals from each of these populations were digested with eight restriction enzymes, and the blots were probed with the full-length probe.

Again, there was no detectable variation for the small heat shock gene in these populations (data not shown).

VARIATION AMONG MEMBERS OF THE BRASSICACEAE

Restriction site variation in the small heat shock gene was assessed among the members of the Brassica triangle and among other genera of the Brassicaceae, Arabidopsis thaliana, Cardamine keyserri, and Rorippa schlechteri. The relationships between the members of the Brassica triangle were established with cytological, morphological, and genetic evidence (Pakrash & Hinata, 1980), and analysis of the chloroplast genomes established the maternal and paternal parents of the amphidiploids (Erickson et al., 1983; Palmer et al., 1983). Bras $sica\ carinata$ has the chloroplast genome of B. nigra, and B. juncea has the chloroplast genome of B. rapa. Although the data for B. napus are equivocal, it appears that in at least some accessions B. rapa is the maternal parent. DNAs from each of these species were digested with five restriction enzymes and probed with the full-length clone and with a clone containing only the coding region. No restriction site polymorphisms were found within the coding regions among members of the Brassica triangle studied, including Raphanus (data not shown). However, variation in restriction sites was detected within the coding region among genera in the Brassicaceae. When the Southern blots were hybridized with the full-length clone, restriction site variation was observed among the members of the Brassica triangle, indicating sequence divergence in the flanking region (Fig. 3).

Primers internal to the coding region were used to amplify the gene encoding the small heat shock protein localized to the chloroplast from six species of the Brassicaceae. A single band was present in Brassica nigra, B. oleraceae, Cardamine keyserri, Arabidopsis thaliana, B. juncea, and B. napus (Fig. 4). This indicates that this is a single-copy gene and that PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) amplification is easily accomplished.

SEQUENCE ANALYSIS

Sequences from different gene families were compared within Arabidopsis thaliana and within Pisum sativum (Table 2). In this analysis, the gene for the chloroplast-localized protein in A. thaliana was compared to other genes from A. thaliana and the gene for the chloroplast protein in P. sativum was compared to other genes in P. sati-

vum; no interspecific comparisons were made. The gene sequences for the endomembrane proteins and both classes of the cytosolically localized protein are less than 50% similar to the gene for the protein localized to the chloroplast. In contrast, the genes for the chloroplast proteins are more than 50% similar to each other based on interspecific comparisons (Table 3), even between monocots and dicots. Genes from each class or family are more similar to each other than they are to other small heat shock proteins in the same species. It is clear from these comparisons that there is no, or very little, gene conversion across gene families.

Analysis of synonymous (Ks) and nonsynonymous (Ka) substitutions (Table 4) indicates that the small heat shock genes are evolving at rates comparable to that reported for other nuclear genes (Wolfe et al., 1989). In the comparison among the grasses, Ks is not saturated, and Ka is, as expected, much lower than Ks. In the comparisons among the dicots (Table 4), Ks is saturated, reflecting the more distant relationships of these species. The Ka calculated for the small heat shock genes is comparable to the rates reported for the gene for chalcone synthase (Wolfe et al., 1989). Rates of synonymous and nonsynonymous substitutions were determined for three of the gene classes for Arabidopsis thaliana and Glycine max. The complete sequence of the gene for the chloroplast-localized protein in G. max has not been isolated, precluding a comparison of the rate for the entire gene. The gene classes are all evolving at approximately the same rate (Table 4).

In a phylogenetic analysis of the aligned gene sequences of the four major classes of proteins (the Class I and Class II cytosolically localized proteins, the endomembrane proteins, and the chloroplast proteins), the sequences of each gene family form well-supported clades (Fig. 5). Third positions of codons were omitted from the analysis because the rate analysis indicated that substitutions at these positions are saturated. A single tree of 936 steps with a consistency index (CI) of 0.640 was found in all the 100 heuristic searches. The order of gene duplications is not known, so the tree is arbitrarily rooted with the Class I sequences. A tree with the same topology was obtained using aligned amino acid sequences for the same genes (data not shown). Within each gene family, the gene phylogenies are roughly congruent with the species phylogenies. However, the taxon sampling is not the same in each gene family. There is weak support (i.e., bootstrap values less than 50%) for some of the branches within the Class II gene family.

Hae III Digest

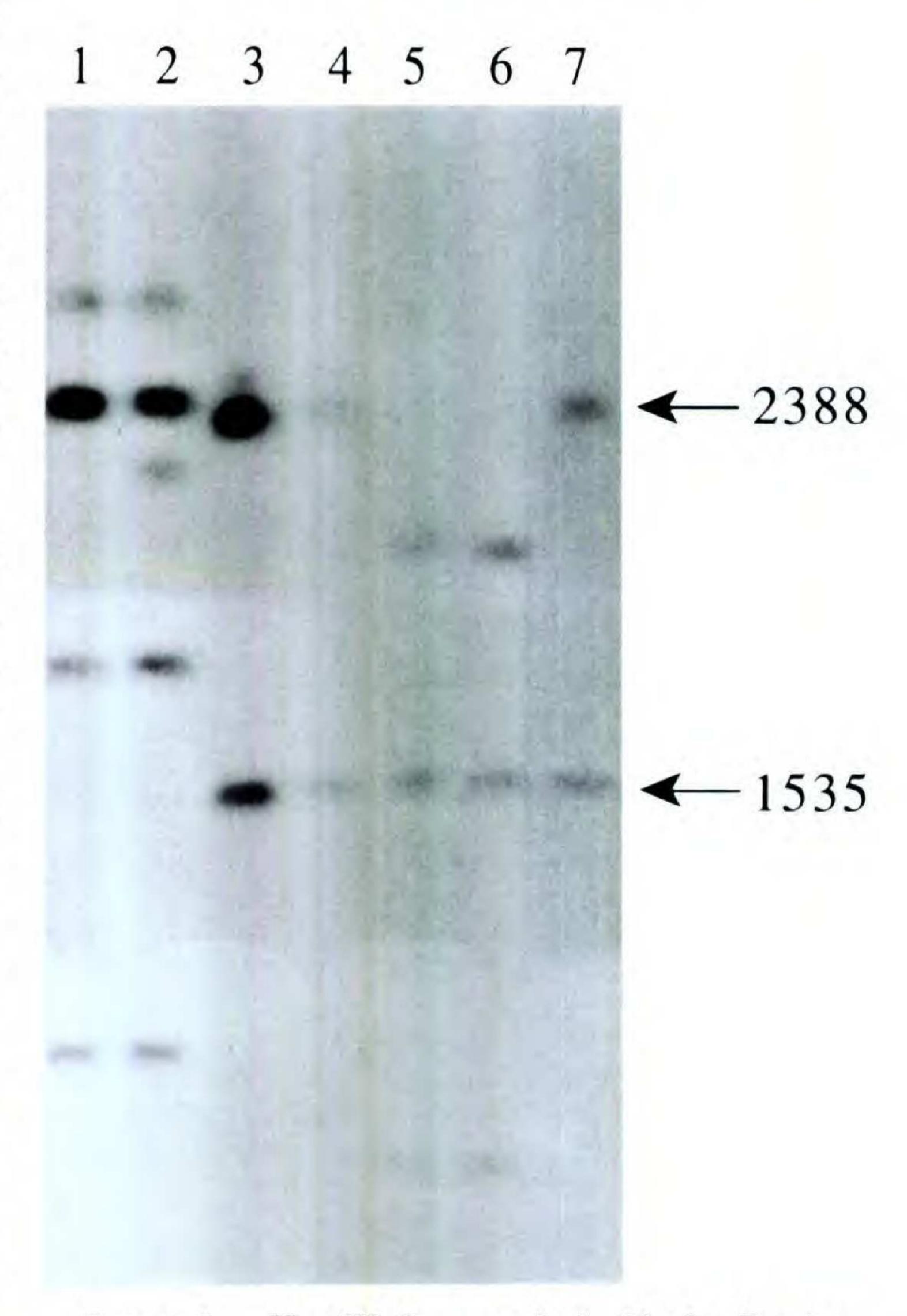


FIGURE 3. Hae III digest probed with the B. nigra small heat shock gene. Lane 1, B. nigra; lane 2, B. juncea; lanes 3 and 4, R. sativus; lanes 5 and 6, A. thaliana; lane 7, B. oleracea.

DISCUSSION

Phylogenetic analysis of molecular data sets has enabled evolutionary biologists to approach many questions not answerable with morphological data alone. In plant evolutionary studies, rDNA and cpDNA are the most frequently used molecular markers. Chloroplast DNA is useful in reconstructing organismal relationships above the species level,

TABLE 2. Similarity of the gene coding for the chloroplast-localized protein to other small heat shock proteins in *Arabidopsis thaliana* and *Pisum sativum*.

	A. $thaliana$	P. sativum
Class I	47.9%	44.5%
Class II	45.0%	47.6%
Endomembrane-localized		41.6%

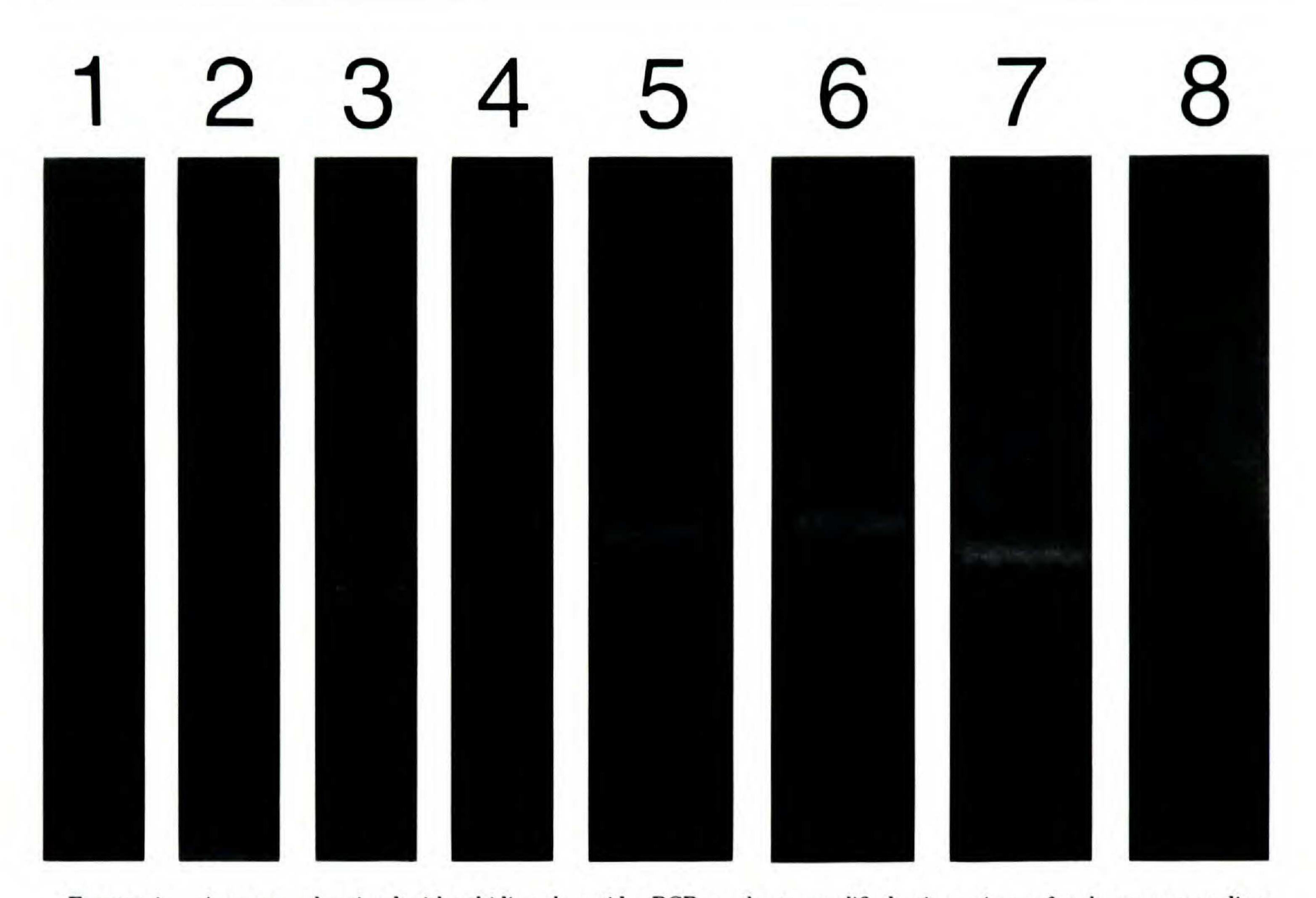


FIGURE 4. Agarose gel stained with ethidium bromide. PCR products amplified using primers for the gene encoding the chloroplast protein. Lane 1, Brassica nigra; 2, B. napus; 3, R. schlechteri; 4, B. carinata; 5, B. oleracea; 6, B. juncea; 7, A. thaliana; 8, C. keyserri. The A. thaliana PCR product is 590 bp.

through both restriction site and sequence analysis, due to its low rate of evolution. However, because chloroplasts are typically uniparentally inherited, the usefulness of cpDNA data sets may be limited when there has been hybridization and introgression. For example, some individuals of Helianthus annuus have the rDNA of one species and the cpDNA of another (Dorado et al., 1992; Rieseberg et al., 1990; Rieseberg & Brunsfeld, 1992). Phylogenetic relationships inferred from a tree based on cpDNA can contradict those inferred from an rDNA tree. Patterns of cpDNA distribution can also reflect geographical relationships rather than species designations (Brunsfeld et al., 1992; Matos, 1992; Soltis et al., 1992). Studies such as these make clear the need for additional nuclear markers for use in phylogenetic studies.

Many researchers have avoided using nuclear markers because of the concern that many nuclear genes are members of multi-gene families and that gene conversion among these genes would obscure orthologous (due to speciation and reflecting organismal phylogeny) and paralogous (due to gene duplication and reflecting gene phylogeny) relationships. In a recent review, Doyle (1993) stated

that "The nuclear genome would appear to have limitless potential for phylogenetic studies . . . yet it remains largely untapped as a source of DNA characters." Gene duplication and conversion are widely believed to be important in the evolution of multi-gene families (Ohta, 1987, 1988). Frequent gene conversion among members of multi-gene families maintains sequence similarity but also restricts the independent evolution of individual genes and results in concerted evolution. Two forces will maintain high levels of similarity among gene sequences: selection and gene conversion. In gene conversion, related gene sequences are homogenized within a genome. Using computer simulation, Sanderson & Doyle (1992) examined the difficulty in determining true species relationships using sequence data from multi-gene families when there has been gene conversion and recombination. The results of this study suggest that the true species tree can be inferred when gene conversion is high (i.e., as in rDNA) and when gene conversion is low, but that intermediate levels of gene conversion will make it difficult to distinguish orthologous and paralogous genes and will obscure species relationships. An analysis of sequences of the nuclear gene

TABLE 3. Similarity of the nucleotide sequences of the genes for the chloroplast-localized proteins.

	P. sativum	G. max	P. hybrida	A. thaliana	T. aestivum A
P. sativum					
G. max	82.4%				
P. hybrida	65.7%	72.3%			
A. thaliana	63.1%	69.2%	63.3%		
T. aestivum A	52.2%	59.6%	54.7%	56.2%	
T. aestivum B	52.6%	59.2%	54.1%	55.5%	96.5%

family encoding the small subunit of ribulose 1,5-bisphosphatase carboxylase (rbcS) in 17 genera, including green algae and cyanobacteria, demonstrated gene conversion among the rbcS genes (Meagher et al., 1989). However, Meagher's analysis also indicates that in spite of gene conversion, rbcS sequences can be used in some instances to infer generic and higher-level relationships.

There is no evidence for widespread gene conversion across gene families of the small heat shock genes, although they appear to be related to each other through gene duplications. The small heat shock genes have a higher level of similarity within families across species than they do within species across families; this most likely reflects selective constraints. Similar results were reported in an analysis of the amino acid sequences of the small heat shock proteins (Vierling, 1991). Regions of high similarity within a genome are necessary for gene conversion to occur. Gene conversion would result in higher levels of similarity among genes across families, within a species. The small heat shock genes are evolving at a rate comparable to other nuclear genes and faster than genes encoded in the chloroplast (Wolfe et al., 1989). A comparison of the nuclear Adh genes from Zea mays, Triticum aestivum, and Hordeum vulgare found a Ks of 0.66 and a Ka of 0.03 (Wolfe et al., 1989). Between the Solanaceae and the Brassicaceae, the Ks was greater than 2.50, and Ka was 0.10 (Wolfe et al., 1989).

In a tree of representatives of all the small heat shock gene families, each gene family formed a well-supported clade (bootstrap values of 99-100%). However, there is a lack of support for some of the branches within the Class II cytosolic gene clade. In Pharbatis nil the 17.2 kDa protein is induced by changes in photoperiod and heat shock, and the 18.8 kDa protein is induced only by heat shock. Due to the lack of sequence data for the small heat shock genes in related species, it is unclear whether these two genes are the products of a recent or more ancient duplication. Hence, it is not possible to determine the paralogous and orthologous relationships between these genes and the other Class II sequences. It is this type of uncertainty that can make inferring organismal relationships problematical and perhaps unreliable.

The chloroplast-localized small heat shock genes may prove the most useful in phylogenetic analysis. These genes are present in a single copy in the Brassicaceae, and the gene tree reflects species relationships. In addition, these genes are longer than the other small heat shock genes and thus provide more characters. The sequences for the transit peptides were not used in these analyses due to the difficulty of aligning the sequences across distantly related taxa. However, the rapid evolution

TABLE 4. Rates of synonymous (Ks) and nonsynonymous (Ka) substitutions among the small heat shock genes.

	Ks	Ka
Z. mays vs. T. aestivum		
Chloroplast-localized	$0.44 (\pm 0.13)$	$0.09 (\pm 0.02)$
Class II Gene	$0.36 (\pm 0.09)$	$0.08 (\pm 0.02)$
A. thaliana vs. P. hybrida		
Chloroplast-localized	>2	$0.16 (\pm 0.02)$
A. thaliana vs. G. max		
Class I cytosolic	>2	$0.21 (\pm 0.02)$
Class II cytosolic	>2	$0.22 (\pm 0.02)$

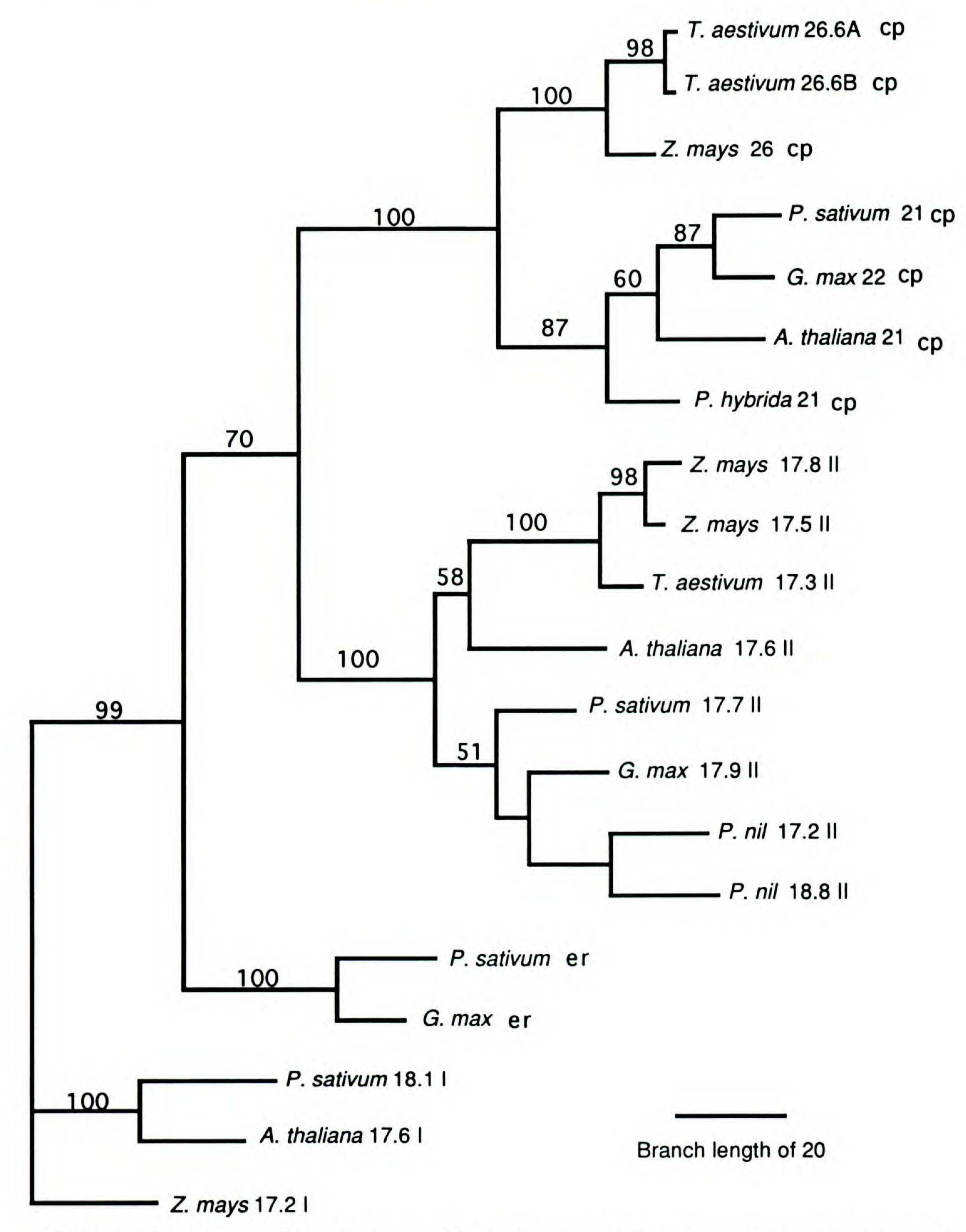


FIGURE 5. Tree of the small heat shock genes. The numbers above the branches are the numbers of times out of 100 bootstrap replicates that the branch was present. The names of the genes encoding the Class I cystosolic proteins are followed by I, those encoding the Class II cytosolic proteins by II, those encoding the endomembrane-localized proteins by er, and those encoding the chloroplast-localized proteins by cp.

of these sequences may prove informative in close comparisons.

For a gene to be useful in phylogenetic analysis the following four criteria need to be met. First, the gene should be present in a single copy within a genome. Second, there should be no variation below the species level but sufficient genetic variation between the species or taxa of interest. Third, if the gene is a member of a multi-gene family, orthologous and paralogous genes should be easily distinguishable. Fourth, the gene should have enough sequence similarity across the taxa of interest for Southern blot hybridization and primer annealing to be possible and no or few introns (Friendlander et al., 1992). In this paper, I have presented evidence that the small heat shock genes may be useful for phylogenetic analysis of plants. Restriction Fragment Length Polymorphism (RFLP) analysis indicates that the small heat shock genes analyzed in the Brassicaceae are single copy and are not variable below the species level but are variable between genera. The gene sequences of the four families of genes are readily distinguishable based on overall similarity comparisons and phylogenetic analysis. The sequences of the different gene families are sufficiently divergent (approximately 50%) that cross-hybridization in Southern blot analysis is unlikely, while within-family sequence conservation permits amplification of genes using PCR. However, not all the small heat shock genes may be useful. The orthologous and paralogous relationships among the genes for the Class Il proteins may be complex. More sequences will be needed before this gene family can be fully evaluated for its utility in phylogenetic analysis.

DNA sequences for protein-coding nuclear genes may be very useful in inferring phylogenetic relationships, but they should not be used without careful examination of their evolutionary dynamics, including gene duplication and conversion. Of the four families of the small heat shock gene families, the genes coding for the chloroplast-localized protein are the most promising for phylogenetic study: a more detailed study of their usefulness in phylogenetic analysis is now in progress.

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